

# Strategic Plan

*Corporation for National Service*

*Fiscal Years 1997 to 2002*

Created in 1993, the **Corporation for National Service** is a public-private partnership that oversees three national service initiatives—**AmeriCorps**, which includes AmeriCorps\*VISTA, AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps and hundreds of local and national non-profits; **Learn and Serve America**, which provides models and assistance to help teachers integrate service and learning from kindergarten through college; the **National Senior Service Corps**, which includes the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companions Program, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

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# I. THE VISION STATEMENT OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

## We envision a nation in which:

- service is promoted and valued by educational, religious, government institutions, business and labor, nonprofit organizations, and individuals, families, and communities throughout the nation.
- problems in communities are being solved through service—and service is a part of problemsolving initiatives in education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs.
- service helps people expand their sense of community so that they look first to themselves and to one another to improve their lives.
- active and informed citizenship is widespread—and service helps each American feel greater responsibility toward others.
- service is known and valued throughout the country because it has touched the lives of millions of Americans.
- service is viewed as a significant part of the transition to adulthood, and youths are viewed as important community resources.
- individual lives are improved through service.
- participants in service are widely honored—and deserve it—both while they serve and for the rest of their lives.
- service is defined, initiated, shaped, and coordinated at the community level.
- individuals find effective ways to engage in service throughout their lives—as children (with their families, through community organizations, and in their schools), and on through adulthood.
- service promotes partnerships at all levels of society and builds bridges among seemingly disparate groups to improve the quality of life of people in our nation.
- successful service endeavors are celebrated in the communities they serve and shared with other communities interested in learning from them.
- service is viewed as nonpartisan and as a form of civic action in which all people take pride.

**We envision an organization that is:**

- a catalytic, coordinating, and creative force in realizing this vision for service in America.
- a valuable resource to and a partner with national, state, and local organizations that seek to solve problems through service.
- entrepreneurial, innovative, effective, and efficient in utilizing its resources, influence, and activities.
- a good steward of taxpayer dollars that operates programs in a cost-effective manner.
- an agency with a demonstrated history of nonpartisanship.

## II. THE MISSION OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

The Corporation's mission is to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to engage in service that addresses the nation's educational, public safety, environmental, and other human needs to achieve direct and demonstrable results and to encourage all Americans to engage in such service. In doing so, the Corporation will foster civic responsibility, strengthen the ties that bind us together as a people, and provide educational opportunity for those who make a substantial commitment to service.

### III. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

The Corporation for National Service came into being when President Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. Congress stated its expectations for the Corporation in this statement of its purpose (42 U.S.C. § 12501):

- (1) meet the unmet human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs of the United States, without displacing existing workers;*
- (2) renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community throughout the United States;*
- (3) expand educational opportunity by rewarding individuals who participate in national service with an increased ability to pursue higher education or job training;*
- (4) encourage citizens of the United States, regardless of age, income, or disability, to engage in full-time or part-time national service;*
- (5) reinvent government to eliminate duplication, support locally established initiatives, require measurable goals for performance, and offer flexibility in meeting those goals;*
- (6) expand and strengthen existing service programs with demonstrated experience in providing structured service opportunities with visible benefits to the participants and community;*
- (7) build on the existing organizational service infrastructure of Federal, State, and local programs and agencies to expand full-time and part-time service opportunities for all citizens; and*
- (8) provide tangible benefits to the communities in which national service is performed.*

To fulfill these purposes, the operations of three entities came together to form the Corporation—ACTION (the Federal Domestic Volunteer Agency), which operated service programs dating back to the War on Poverty of the 1960s; the Commission on National and Community Service, which began during President Bush’s administration; and the Office of National Service, a division of the White House that shepherded the new national service legislation into existence. These organizations came together in the Corporation to offer programs providing service opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds. Together they promote the ethic of service and help solve critical community problems in every state, many Indian tribes, and most territories.

The Corporation organizes its programs into three streams of service.

- **Learn and Serve America** supports and promotes service-learning in schools, universities, and communities. Through structured service activities that help meet community needs, more than 750,000 students improve their academic learning, develop personal skills, and practice responsible citizenship.
- **AmeriCorps** is the national service program that engages thousands of Americans of all ages and backgrounds in full-time and sustained part-time community service, and provides education awards in return for such service.
- **The National Senior Service Corps** is a network of more than 500,000 people age 55 and older who participate in the *Foster Grandparent Program*, the *Senior Companion Program*, and the *Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)*. These programs tap the experience, skills, talents, and creativity of America's seniors.

Through Corporation-supported local programs and projects, more than a million committed participants, volunteers, and service corps members are working to address the nation's unmet, critical needs in the environment, education, public safety, and other areas of human need.

## LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA

*Learn and Serve America* gives young people opportunities to connect community service experiences with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility. The program provides funds to schools, universities, and community organizations. These grantees must create new programs, replicate existing programs, or provide training and development to staff, faculty, and volunteers. Participants in school- and community-based programs range in age from 5 to 17, while college students participate through both undergraduate and graduate programs.

- *Program Elements.* Service-learning programs are coordinated locally through partnerships between schools and community organizations and are administered by state educational agencies, state commissions, nonprofit organizations, and institutions of higher education. Programs typically have three basic components: academic preparation (classes and other structured situations that prepare students for service); community service (activities that students do in communities to fulfill needs); and reflection (an opportunity for students to relate their service experience to their personal and academic learning).
- *Level of Participation.* In fiscal 1996, the school- and community-based programs enrolled more than 750,000 students in service-learning activities. In that same year, college and university programs supported by *Learn and Serve America*



engaged approximately 30,000 students. The students receive no pay for their efforts, but may receive credit in school.

- *Types of Service.* Students work with the community to identify needs and determine appropriate service activities. Projects meet the four national service priority needs, and may include schools, hospitals, nursing homes, community recreation centers, day care centers, parks, and human service agencies of all types. The intensity of service varies from a few hours each semester to twenty hours a week.
- *Funding.* *Learn and Serve America* grants funds to state government entities and national nonprofit organizations. They in turn make subgrants for local service-learning programs. In addition, *Learn and Serve America* grants funds directly to institutions of higher education. State educational agencies receive funds from *Learn and Serve America* through a population-based formula. Nonprofit organizations, state commissions, and institutions of higher education receive funds through a national competitive process. All grantees must demonstrate an increasing level of matching funds in order to qualify for continued federal support. Congress provided \$43 million annually for *Learn and Serve America* in fiscal years 1996 and 1997.

## AMERICORPS

*AmeriCorps* is the national service program that engages thousands of adult Americans, age 17 and over, in community service and provides education awards in exchange for that service. The service comes through the hundreds of local, state, and national organizations across the nation with whom *AmeriCorps* forms partnerships to involve people in results-driven community service. *AmeriCorps* has three divisions. First, there are the state and local programs that make up *AmeriCorps\*State and National*. Second, the Corporation for National Service operates the *AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)*, a full-time residential service program. Third, *AmeriCorps\*VISTA* is an anti-poverty program with a thirty-year history of helping low-income communities.

Members who serve full-time for a year receive education awards worth \$4,725. The awards are paid out as vouchers by the Corporation's National Service Trust. They may be redeemed, within seven years, at institutions of higher education to either pay for current education costs or to pay down loans incurred in previous enrollments in school. *AmeriCorps* participants can earn, at the most, the equivalent of two full-time education awards.

## AmeriCorps\*State and National

- *Program Elements.* The kinds of national service programs that can be supported with Corporation funds under the legislation authorizing AmeriCorps\*State and National are extensive, including community corps, full-time youth corps programs, programs emphasizing individual placements, campus-based programs, professional corps, intergenerational programs, and others. Appendix 5 lists the full range of program types permitted by the National and Community Service Trust Act. Local service programs are run by not-for-profit organizations, local and state government entities, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, local school and police districts, and partnerships among any of the above. Programs may not engage participants in lobbying, support religious activities, or take part in partisan political activity.
- *Level of Participation.* Members must be at least 17 years of age. While the Corporation may provide help with applicant referrals to local programs, recruitment, selection, and placement are the responsibility of the grantees. Full-time members must serve at least 1,700 hours over a seven- to twelve-month period to earn an education award worth \$4,725. Members may also serve part-time for one or more years to qualify for a partial or full education award. In the 1996 program year for *AmeriCorps\*State and National*, running from September 1995 to September 1996, there were more than 23,000 members serving in 425 direct grant-supported programs. *AmeriCorps\*State and National* members may receive a subsistence stipend (in fiscal 1997, approximately \$8,000 for full-time members, of which the Corporation pays 85 percent) and benefits.
- *Types of Service.* Services range from tutoring children in pre-school programs to serving in community policing programs to rehabilitating housing for the homeless. In its first year of operation, *AmeriCorps\*State and National* members provided direct benefits to approximately 4.5 million Americans.
- *Funding.* Two-thirds of the federal funds appropriated for *AmeriCorps\*State and National* goes to the states, to be managed by state commissions on national service appointed by the governor in each state. One-half of the federal funds distributed to the states is determined by formula. One-half is distributed to states through a national competition. These funds are managed by the state commissions on national service, who are also primarily responsible for the local programs, ensuring their compliance with federal laws and regulations and the quality of programming. The remaining one-third of the federal funding for *AmeriCorps\*State and National* goes to regional and national nonprofit organizations. Oversight of these programs is the responsibility of the Corporation for National Service. The grantees receiving

*AmeriCorps\*State and National* funding must contribute a substantial amount of matching funds in order to qualify for federal support. *AmeriCorps\*State and National* received \$215 million in fiscal 1996 and in fiscal 1997.

### **AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)**

- *Program Elements.* *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* is a full-time, residential service program that combines the best practices of the military and of the many civilian service and conservation corps going back to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of the 1930s. Members live and train at one of four campuses. In three locations they occupy closed or downsized military bases: San Diego, California; Aurora, Colorado; and Charleston, South Carolina. In Perry Point, Maryland, the *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* campus is at a veteran's medical center. Former or retired members of the armed forces are represented throughout the *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* staffing structure. *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* conducts service projects in partnership with local and state sponsors whose applications for project support must meet criteria targeted at encouraging community involvement.
- *Level of Participation.* *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* members are between the ages of 18 and 24 and serve full-time in a team-based structure for a ten-month period. Recruitment, selection, and placement of members is managed entirely by the Corporation for National Service and *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* staff. In fiscal 1996, there were 981 members who completed 446 service projects. In fiscal 1997, 983 members completed 478 service projects. *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* members receive a \$4,000 annual living allowance, room and board, and earn an education award at the successful completion of their service.
- *Types of Service.* *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* member service has a special focus on environmental issues and disaster relief. As a national program *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* serves communities throughout the United States. When *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* service takes the members beyond the immediate area of the campuses, they call the project a "spike." The term is borrowed from the Civilian Conservation Corps, referring to the spikes used in securing tents to the ground. Members serve in state and national forests, building trails and providing fire mitigation services. In urban areas, *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* members develop environmentally sound habitats and help citizens use energy more efficiently. Members have served in twenty-two disasters, most recently providing flood relief in North Dakota and Minnesota. Service activities also include tutoring children, rehabilitating public schools and public housing in urban areas, and providing assistance in daily living activities to low-income residents of nursing homes.

- *Funding.* *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* is operated by the Corporation for National Service and is a fully federally funded program. Some costs for lodging and food associated with “spikes” and project supplies and materials are offset by sponsor support. *AmeriCorps\*NCCC* received an annual appropriation of \$18 million in fiscal 1996 and fiscal 1997.

## **AmeriCorps\*VISTA**

- *Program Elements.* For more than thirty years, *AmeriCorps\*VISTA* members have been serving disadvantaged communities. The program increases the capability of people to improve their lives. Members of *AmeriCorps\*VISTA* work and live in the communities in which they serve, creating programs that can continue after they complete their service. *AmeriCorps\*VISTA* members may choose to receive a lump sum cash payment at the end of their service instead of the education award. Those who choose this option, about 40 percent of the *VISTA* members, receive \$100 for each month of service.
- *Levels of Participation.* Members must be at least 18 years old, with no upper age limit. They serve full-time for at least one year; the average length of service is eighteen months. *AmeriCorps\*VISTA* keeps track of service levels in terms of “volunteer service years,” which are equal to one member serving full-time for twelve months. In fiscal 1996, *VISTA* members completed 3,435 service years in approximately 900 projects. *VISTA* members are paid directly by the Corporation and receive a yearly stipend that averaged approximately \$8,000 in fiscal 1997.
- *Types of Service.* *AmeriCorps\*VISTA*’s main activities involve strengthening and expanding the capacity of local organizations to address the needs of low-income communities in six program emphasis areas—education, health and nutrition, housing and homelessness, community/economic development, public safety, and the environment. In 1996, *VISTA* members provided direct benefits to almost 2.3 million Americans. *VISTA* members recruited 114,000 community volunteers and mobilized resources worth \$70 million to support their projects’ activities.
- *Funding.* *VISTA* members serve in local organizations that, while not required to provide matching funds, must absorb the cost of training, supervision, and logistical support. In fiscal 1996 and fiscal 1997, *AmeriCorps\*VISTA* received an annual appropriation of \$41.2 million. In addition to these federal funds, *AmeriCorps\*VISTA* promotes “cost-share” arrangements with project sponsors, in which sponsors reimburse the federal government for the direct support costs of the *VISTAs*. In fiscal 1997, *AmeriCorps\*VISTA* project sponsors have provided more than \$12 million to pay for cost shares.

## NATIONAL SENIOR SERVICE CORPS

The *National Senior Service Corps* brings the skill, energy, and creativity of half a million older Americans, age 55 and over, to bear on important community problems through its three divisions—the *Foster Grandparent Program*, the *Senior Companion Program*, and the *Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)*. Much of the focus within the National Senior Service Corps is on its initiative to implement “Programming for Impact.” This is the Senior Corps’ new programming approach that enhances the “service” side of senior service. It calls for projects to measure accomplishments and impacts or outcomes that occur as a result of volunteer efforts.

### Foster Grandparent Program

- *Program Elements.* Since 1965, the *Foster Grandparent Program* has provided valuable aid to children and youth with exceptional needs. *Foster Grandparents* serve twenty hours a week and receive stipends set at \$2.45 an hour. *Foster Grandparents* must be age 60 or above and in the low-income eligibility category. In addition to the stipend, they receive accident, liability, and automobile insurance, if needed, as coverage during their assignments.
- *Levels of Participation.* In fiscal 1996, there were more than 21,400 *Foster Grandparents* serving in 279 projects. These participants provided service to almost 80,000 children with special and exceptional needs.
- *Types of Service.* *Foster Grandparents* serve in schools, hospitals, drug treatment centers, correctional institutions, and Head Start and day care centers. *Foster Grandparents* help children who have been abused or neglected, mentor troubled teenagers and young mothers, and care for premature infants and children with physical disabilities.
- *Funding.* Local sponsors apply each year to the Corporation for grants to operate *Foster Grandparent Programs*. In fiscal 1996, appropriations totaled \$61.9 million. In fiscal 1997, this increased to \$77.4 million. In fiscal 1996, nonfederal contributions of \$31.5 million represented a match of \$0.51 for every federal dollar invested, well over the 10 percent match required by law.

## Senior Companion Program

- *Program Elements.* *Senior Companions* provide assistance to frail, home-bound individuals, most of them elderly. These clients have difficulties with daily living tasks and *Senior Companions* help them retain their dignity and independence. The *Senior Companion Program*, like the *Foster Grandparent Program*, provides low-income eligible persons, age 60 and over, the opportunity to serve those in need. *Senior Companions* receive the same stipend and insurance as *Foster Grandparents* and serve twenty hours a week.
- *Levels of Participation.* In fiscal 1996, there were approximately 11,800 *Senior Companions* in service. Through 185 projects, *Senior Companions* serve more than 40,000 clients each year.
- *Types of Service.* In twenty hours of service each week, *Senior Companions* help home-bound clients with chores such as paying bills, buying groceries, and finding transportation to medical appointments. *Senior Companions* receive training in how to assist those with Alzheimer's disease, stroke, diabetes, and mental health—and alert doctors and family members to potential health problems.
- *Funding.* Similar to *Foster Grandparents*, local sponsors apply each year to the Corporation for funds to operate *Senior Companion* projects. In fiscal 1996, the program was funded at \$31 million. Approximately the same amount was provided for fiscal 1997. In fiscal 1996, nonfederal contributions of \$18.8 million represented a match of \$0.61 for every federal dollar invested, far beyond the 10 percent match required in the law.

## Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

- *Program Elements.* The *Retired and Senior Volunteer Program*, one of the largest volunteer efforts in the nation, matches local problems with older Americans who are willing to help. *RSVP* volunteers choose how and where they want to serve. They determine how many hours a week they can serve. *RSVP* volunteers do not receive any stipend, but the *RSVP* project may reimburse them for some out-of-pocket costs associated with their service activities. In addition, *RSVP* provides some insurance coverage for volunteers while on assignment.
- *Levels of Participation.* Each year more than 450,000 older Americans, age 55 and over, provide community service through the sponsorship of more than 750 local *RSVP* projects. The amount of service can vary from a few hours a month to almost full-time, with the average hours of service being about four hours a week. Fourteen percent of *RSVP* volunteers serve at least eleven hours a week.

- *Types of Service.* *RSVP* volunteers, who serve through nonprofit organizations, organize neighborhood watch programs, tutor children and teenagers, renovate homes, teach English to immigrants, program computers, help people recover from natural disasters, serve as museum docents—and whatever else their skills and interests lead them to do, to meet the needs of their community.
- *Funding.* In fiscal 1996, *RSVP* received \$34.3 million. With a slight increase, this went up to \$35.4 million in fiscal 1997. In fiscal 1996, nonfederal contributions of \$35.9 million represented a match of \$1.13 for every dollar invested in *RSVP*, demonstrating the broad support that exists for *RSVP* across the country.

## **IV. THE STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE**

**GOAL ONE:** Service will help solve the nation's unmet education, public safety, environmental, and other human needs.

**GOAL TWO:** Communities will be made stronger through service.

**GOAL THREE:** The lives of those who serve will be improved through their service experience.

**GOAL FOUR:** Service will become a common expectation and experience of Americans as an integral part of civic responsibility.

**GOAL FIVE:** The Corporation will develop and maintain sound organizational systems and effective partnerships with the wider national service network.



## V. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

**GOAL ONE:** Service will help solve the nation's unmet education, public safety, environmental, and other human needs.

### Strategic Objectives for Goal One:

*A. Increase the Corporation's focus on children and youth, making it a presumptive priority within each program.*

#### *Implementation Steps*

1. Deploy AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve, and Senior Corps participants and program resources to help implement the America Reads initiative to ensure that all children learn to read by the end of the third grade. ["Participants" in this document means students and out-of-school youth who serve in Learn and Serve America programs (school- and community-based programs for school-age youth and higher education programs); AmeriCorps members (including AmeriCorps\*State, AmeriCorps\*National, AmeriCorps\*VISTA, and AmeriCorps\*NCCC); and Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP volunteers who serve through the National Senior Service Corps.]
2. Work with local and state efforts to achieve the goals for children and youth set by the 1997 Presidents' Summit for America's Future.
3. Expand the use of participants in AmeriCorps, the Senior Corps, and college work-study as service-learning coordinators and organizers of youth.
4. Work with organizations that serve youth to increase opportunities for youth to serve others and to engage in service-learning.
5. Enhance, identify, and promote direct and demonstrable "getting things done" outcomes of service-learning.
6. Facilitate the progression of schools, colleges, and universities from encouraging student service to actively supporting service-learning.
7. Focus AmeriCorps\*VISTA's anti-poverty activities on low-income children and their families.
8. Form partnerships with national, state, and local organizations serving children and youth (including those involved in after-school child care, health, mentoring, early childhood education, and school improvement) to improve the quality of national service and increase the number of community volunteers serving in this area.

9. Evaluate national service programs working with children and youth to determine how to improve the effectiveness of the service provided by participants and community volunteers.

*B. Ensure that all Corporation-funded programs have objectives and a system of measuring progress in meeting those objectives.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Assist state commissions and program sponsors to develop and set objectives and measure progress toward them.
2. Provide training for state commissions and parent organizations on impact evaluations so they in turn can train their programs and sites.

*C. Build on the 1996 National Senior Service Corps conference to ensure that by 1999, all Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and Retired and Senior Volunteer programs operate consistent with the goal of “getting things done.”*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Mobilize the time, talent, experiences, and resources of the members of the Senior Corps programs—the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, Senior Companion Program, and Foster Grandparent Program—to meet critical community needs in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs.
2. Continue efforts to place the emphasis of Senior Corps programs on Programming for Impact: “Getting Things Done.”
3. Review and reconsider all Senior Corps programs at least every six years to reflect new priorities and high-quality programs.
4. Support Senior Corps collaborations with other national service programs.

*D. Organize a leadership conference in early 1998 for school, community, and higher education grantees of Learn and Serve America to strengthen and improve their efforts to provide high-quality service-learning opportunities for America’s youth.*

*E. Increase the capacity of programs to respond to local emergencies and natural disasters.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Build partnerships with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Red Cross, and other national organizations, as well as emergency service agencies at the state and local levels.
2. Support training of national service staff and participants.
3. Encourage participation in local emergency management coordinating bodies.
4. Increase the number of AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps teams trained and available year-round to respond to disasters.
5. Document and measure the amount and quality of assistance, including response time, provided in local disasters by AmeriCorps members.

*F. In 1998, ensure that performance indicators are developed for strategic objectives that allow for the demonstration that the nation's unmet critical needs are being solved by national service participants.*

**GOAL TWO: Communities will be made stronger through service.**

**Strategic Objectives for Goal Two:**

*A. Assist in the follow-through of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future to achieve a new level of concerted citizen action in communities throughout the nation focused on the problems of children and youth.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Encourage the state commissions, Corporation state offices, state education authorities, Senior Corps programs, and Corporation grantees to work with the states and local teams who attended the Presidents' Summit in planning local and statewide summits and other activities to help communities meet the Summit goals for all children.
2. Demonstrate how service by students, senior citizens, and service corps members of all ages can be effective strategies in advancing communities' Summit goals.

*B. Implement effective strategies and processes for collaboration among local national service programs and with other organizations responsible for addressing community needs.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Determine effective approaches to collaboration through program evaluations and other forms of research, and disseminate findings and incorporate them into program policies.
2. Remove policy or regulatory barriers to local collaboration.
3. Involve community residents in the planning, development, implementation, and assessment of national service projects.
4. Promote the sustainability of national service projects by mobilizing volunteers from the community.
5. Increase opportunities for new community-based organizations to obtain national service participants.
6. Expand the number of AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps environmental and other human needs projects conducted in urban areas with high poverty levels.
7. Ensure the full participation of the Corporation's principal partners and representatives—state commissions, Corporation state offices, and state education authorities—in the development of the Unified State Plan.
8. Ensure that agencies outside the scope of the Corporation's programs that provide service opportunities and other interested volunteer programs (including the Voluntary Action Centers organized by the Points of Light Foundation) participate in the preparation of the Unified State Plans, in accord with Section 178 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended (42 U.S.C. § 12638).

*C. Increase the number of people of different backgrounds serving side-by-side.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Assess the diversity of national service participants at the site level.
2. Develop and implement strategies to increase diversity.
3. Carry through, under the leadership of the Corporation's Recruitment/Selection/Placement unit, an active approach to minority institutions, including the Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and schools and

higher educational institutions with a concentration of Hispanic, African-American, or Native American tribes.

*D. Develop a new model of service leadership through an expanded national service leadership strategy.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Combine the three AmeriCorps Leaders programs (which recruit, train, and place individuals with service experience and leadership potential ) to support service programs.
2. Expand the scope of the program to provide Leaders for Learn and Serve America and the Senior Corps.
3. Through training and policy changes, make the new Leaders' program a catalyst for fostering cross-stream service programming and collaboration.
4. Increase the number of Leaders consistent with demand.

**GOAL THREE: The lives of those who serve will be improved through their service experience.**

**Strategic Objectives for Goal Three:**

*A. Increase the number of individuals who have the opportunity to earn educational aid by performing service.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Expand the AmeriCorps "education awards only" program by encouraging nonprofit and religious groups to increase their service programs and provide the living allowance and other program costs.
2. Expand AmeriCorps\*VISTA, AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps, and AmeriCorps\*State and National and achieve further cost reductions to enable funding to go further.
3. Expand the AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps member population to 5,000 by the year 2002.
4. Expand AmeriCorps programming for summer service through existing AmeriCorps sponsors.

5. Implement the national service scholarship program so that at least one locally matched \$1,000 scholarship for outstanding student service is offered in every high school.
6. Encourage colleges and universities to increase the share of college work-study placements dedicated to community service, consistent with the President's challenge to higher education and the targets set at the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, and assist colleges and universities in the development of effective service placements.
7. Use national service as a vehicle to implement activities designed to facilitate the transition of welfare recipients to work.

*B. Provide training and technical assistance to programs to improve AmeriCorps members' experiences.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Focus on the problems of member retention, the provision of GED classes and other assistance for members who are disadvantaged, assistance with educational and job counseling for graduating members, and promotion of citizen responsibility, including a continued commitment to service.
2. Explore new ways to work with state and local youth corps to increase their effectiveness and broaden their support.

*C. Increase Learn and Service America's ability to improve the lives of participants, including their educational success and community involvement.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Undertake a review of local programs to identify how successful programs best improve the lives of participants.
2. Make necessary changes to the national program based on this research to enhance and promote the academic and personal development outcomes of service-learning.
3. Work with technical assistance providers to disseminate appropriate guidance and information.

*D. Increase the number of individuals with disabilities serving in AmeriCorps and other national service programs through full use of the disability funds provided in the National and Community Service Trust Act.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Double the number of participants with disabilities serving in AmeriCorps.
2. Greatly increase the percentage of people with disabilities serving through other national service programs.

*E. Affirm that the lives of senior service volunteers will be improved through their service.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Ensure that senior service volunteer opportunities at the local level provide service options with varying duration, incentives, challenges, and roles as well as the opportunity to move in and out of various levels of commitment and roles as life circumstances and interests change.
2. Ensure that senior volunteers are effectively recruited, well prepared and trained, appropriately assigned to volunteer opportunities, provided with clear information on their roles and responsibilities, and given a range of supports to help them maximize their contributions.

**GOAL FOUR: Service will become a common expectation and experience of Americans as an integral part of civic responsibility.**

**Strategic Objectives for Goal Four:**

*A. Increase the number of part-time, unstipended volunteers recruited or organized through Corporation-supported programs and increase the effectiveness of these volunteers in meeting community needs.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Work with leading volunteer organizations and Corporation grantees to plan how to achieve and manage this increase.
2. Double the number of part-time, unstipended volunteers recruited or organized through Corporation programs.
3. Revise application guidelines to require all grantees to address the issue of volunteer generation.

*B. Build, expand, and sustain an infrastructure that integrates service-learning and student service opportunities into the educational system and community-based youth programs.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Expand Learn and Serve America resources and direct the majority of these resources toward this objective.
2. Increase the participation of students in service-learning from pre-school through university.
3. Enhance the civic education component of service-learning and have it recognized as a valued outcome.
4. Support school reform activities that include service-learning, and increase efforts to integrate service-learning into education reform plans.
5. Expand training and technical assistance.
6. Implement the Leader Schools initiative in 1997.
7. Launch an effort beginning in 1997 to promote understanding of service-learning among educators and others, such as community-based organizations, businesses, foundations, parents, students, and policymakers.
8. Develop key partnerships with national education and youth organizations committed to achieve the Presidents' Summit goal of securing opportunities for all young Americans to serve.
9. Expand the use of AmeriCorps members, Senior Corps participants, and college work-study students as service-learning coordinators and organizers of youth volunteers.
10. Urge other federal agencies and state and local government entities that support education programs to encourage and support service-learning.
11. See that national service participants engaged in teaching are trained in service-learning methods.



*C. Double the number of participants in the National Senior Service Corps to 1 million.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Pursue cost-share arrangements with private and public organizations, especially those concerned with home health care.
2. Review and propose revisions to the legislation, regulations, and Corporation policies to remove impediments to expansion.
3. Form partnerships with corporations, foundations, major retiree organizations, university alumni associations, civic groups, and national nonprofits to increase opportunities for seniors to serve.

*D. Facilitate the involvement of the national service network in “days and seasons of service.”*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Include Make a Difference Day in the fall, Martin Luther King Day in January, and National Volunteer Week and National Youth Service Day in April as occasions for the Corporation’s programs and all the streams of service to work together on signature service projects.
2. Not later than the fall of 1997, help to initiate a series of “Saturdays or Sundays of Service” that will allow for longer-term commitments to grow out of the signature days.

*E. Use initiatives such as America Reads to provide opportunities for cross-stream collaboration.*

*F. Maintain and strengthen the Corporation’s special relationship with the Points of Light Foundation, as provided in the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. § 12661).*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Work cooperatively with the Points of Light Foundation, the original partner with the Corporation in creating the Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future, to fulfill the goals for children and youth set at the Summit and the commitments made by representatives of the service and volunteer community.
2. Engage the Corporation’s national service network in supporting the Foundation’s mission of promoting and sustaining volunteering as a way to help meet some of the nation’s most critical social problems.

**GOAL FIVE:        The Corporation will develop and maintain sound organizational systems and effective partnerships with the wider national service network.**

**Strategic Objectives for Goal Five:**

*A. Strengthen internal and external management systems.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Reorganize the Corporation's management structure based on a review process that will determine how to make the Corporation more efficient and effective, especially in the areas of internal and cross-department communications, customer service, program quality, program coordination at the state and national levels, consistent and independent monitoring and evaluation, financial and legal accountability, and teamwork across programs, units, and headquarters/field operations.
2. Implement an integrated program and grants management system and ensure that all programs receive funding four weeks before program start-up by the end of 1998.
3. Implement an integrated, fully modern financial management system by the end of 1998; produce auditable financial statements for 1998; and implement sound management controls.
4. Conduct an assessment of the program monitoring system by the end of 1997 and implement a plan to improve the program monitoring system at the program, state, and national levels.
5. Participate in a congressionally mandated study by the National Academy on Public Administration and conduct appropriate follow-up on recommendations.
6. Take full advantage of methodologies and technologies (including expanded use of the Internet and Intranet) that will improve communications within the Corporation and with state commissions and other partners.
7. Strengthen the development of human resources by implementing a comprehensive staff improvement program for supervisory and non-supervisory personnel in headquarters and field offices.
8. Tie individual performance plans to annual plans.
9. Support the Labor-Management Partnership Council.
10. Increase efforts to recruit and retain diverse staff, especially at the senior level.

11. Implement and strengthen systems that will ensure compliance with the Government Corporations Control Act.

*B. Strengthen the key support systems—research, evaluation, and training and technical assistance—that nourish effective service programs.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Conduct a needs assessment to identify key issues in research, evaluation, and training and technical assistance.
2. Use the needs assessment to design and implement well-coordinated and responsive research, evaluation, and training and technical assistance.
3. Review and recompetete all training and technical assistance and evaluation contracts by 1998.
4. Extend training and technical assistance and evaluation contracts, as appropriate, to all Corporation programs.
5. Strengthen substantive expertise in the key issues areas by contracting for issue area experts in 1997, conducting evaluations of programs by issue area, and fostering “affinity groups” for programs working on the same issue.
6. Review and improve the recruitment function to achieve an increase in AmeriCorps member applications proportionate to the growth in AmeriCorps.
7. Recruit individuals with higher skill levels for AmeriCorps programs.
8. Ensure a diverse pool of members in AmeriCorps programs.
9. Review and revise program guidelines to reflect the Principles of High Quality Programs.
10. Develop a system to allow national service participants to provide their input in decisions that affect programs.

*C. Improve national service program structures and systems through better service to state and local program levels.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Decentralize funding decisions while maintaining accountability through monitoring and evaluation.
2. Strengthen the role of state commissions as the convener and coordinator of service programs in the state, a provider of support to national service programs, and the prime administrator of AmeriCorps\*State grants.
3. Implement a system to assess state commission performance based on criteria established in the 1997 state administrative guidelines.
4. Develop and implement a unified state planning system for service programs including all Corporation programs.
5. Encourage the implementation of national service participant networks within each of the states. These networks would permit participant-to-participant communication across programs. In addition, these networks could provide a member perspective in such statewide tasks as preparing the Unified State Plans.
6. Implement a plan to streamline and simplify the AmeriCorps grants system so that the Corporation need not engage in extensive negotiations regarding AmeriCorps\*State and National sponsor budgets.
7. Implement a plan to link the AmeriCorps\*NCCC, AmeriCorps\*VISTA, and AmeriCorps\*State and National programs more closely.
8. Emphasize collaboration among AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and Senior Corps at the national, state, and local levels.
9. Develop a single point of contact for information about national service for each state.
10. Develop “customer service” standards to improve the Corporation’s responsiveness to external and internal partners.

*D. Broaden financial, in-kind, and human resources for national service while focusing the federal role.*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Implement a strategy to achieve cost-reduction goals for AmeriCorps by assisting local sponsors to decrease their reliance on Corporation funding, to decrease costs, and to diversify support.
2. Expand the role of the independent and corporate sectors (including roles in evaluation, leadership and other training, and financing).
3. Strengthen partnerships with a wide variety of agencies and organizations including leading volunteer organizations, faith-based organizations, governors, mayors, and other state and locally elected officials, organizations serving children and youth, organizations serving senior citizens and retired Americans, educators, federal agencies, the military, and private sector partners.
4. Establish a coordinated plan to work cooperatively, to share resources, and to avoid duplication of effort among the federal agencies involved in their own service programs, particularly those that made commitments at the Presidents' Summit for America's Future.

*E. Implement and strengthen systems that will ensure efficient and effective planning, performance measurement, and reporting of results, including compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).*

*Implementation Steps*

1. Establish in 1998 a regular schedule for revising the strategic plan to ensure that: (a) objectives and implementation steps are measurable and clearly related to the strategic goals; and (b) goals, objectives, and implementation steps reflect current federal policy and appropriation levels.
2. Modify and expand existing program data systems by the end of 1998 to meet the expanded requirements for performance measurement under GPRA.
3. Design and implement in 1998 new data sources needed to measure customer satisfaction and program quality.
4. Establish wherever possible in 1998 baseline data for the performance indicators to be proposed in the Annual Performance Plan for fiscal 1999.

5. To produce a results-oriented environment, integrate in 1998 the several planning processes in the Corporation with a focus on measurable results, including the strategic plan, the annual performance plan (focused on public results), the annual plan (focused on internal processes), and the unified state plans (bringing together state commissions, Corporation state offices, and state education authorities).
6. Publish and disseminate the strategic and performance plans widely to all stakeholders as they are revised, including posting them on the Corporation's website.
7. Increase accountability of management and staff for the achievement of strategic and annual goals, beginning in 1998, by: (a) requiring organizational units at every level to link their annual plans to the strategic plan; (b) holding quarterly reviews of unit performance against strategic and annual goals at every level of the Corporation; (c) developing an effective system of incentives for meeting and exceeding goals and disincentives for failing to perform adequately in terms of set goals and objectives.

## **APPENDIXES**

- 1. HOW THE STRATEGIC PLAN WAS CREATED**
- 2. THE RELATIONSHIP OF CORPORATION STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES TO THE FISCAL 1999 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN**
- 3. KEY FACTORS AFFECTING ACHIEVEMENT OF GENERAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**
- 4. THE ROLE OF PROGRAM EVALUATIONS IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN**
- 5. TYPES OF NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS ELIGIBLE FOR PROGRAM ASSISTANCE**

## APPENDIX 1—HOW THE STRATEGIC PLAN WAS CREATED

The Corporation for National Service began its strategic planning process in late 1995. The Executive Director of the Corporation began a series of meetings with a broad section of Corporation staff designed to craft a formal statement of the Corporation's vision and goals for its programs. Using the data produced by these workshops, the Executive Director produced a vision, a mission statement, and a set of broad strategic goals. This document was presented first to the Corporation's senior staff and then to the Board of Directors. The Board discussed and, with some revisions, approved the document.

In the next planning phase, which lasted into the summer of 1996, the Executive Director began a series of lengthy interviews with all senior staff to identify objectives that could be derived from the draft set of goals approved by the Board. During this period of development, the new Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation became closely involved in the drafting of strategic objectives. The plan went through numerous drafts, as the senior staff refined and honed the objectives to reflect the basic mission of the programs and the broad mission of the Corporation. In the fall of 1996, the Board approved the draft plan for circulation to the public.

The Corporation sought to circulate the draft plan as widely as feasible. The plan went on the Corporation's newly created website on the Internet. The plan was posted on several listservs and was mailed with a request for comment to the Corporation's "partners." This mailing went to state commissions, Corporation state offices, other national service organizations including the National and Community Service Coalition, foundations, and private sector partners. At meetings and conferences organized by the Corporation and at most outside meetings attended by staff, representatives of the Corporation shared the plan with other stakeholders in national service. Many comments were received through this process and were incorporated into the final version of the plan.

After processing comments received during the public review phase, the Executive Director prepared a final version of the plan, which was approved by the Board of Directors late in 1996. This version of the plan included a vision, a mission statement, five strategic goals, and a set of implementation objectives for each goal.

In April 1997, the Chief Operating Officer of the Corporation assigned the task of managing the Corporation's compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) to the Office of Policy Research in the Department of Evaluation and Effective Practices. This effort focused on expanding the strategic plan to include the components required by the Results Act and preparing an annual performance plan for fiscal 1999. The expansion of the strategic plan took place in three stages.



The first stage had program staff and Corporation leadership update the implementation steps to reflect the most recent developments in program policy and operations. This included new references to America Reads and to the Presidents' Summit for America's Future.

The second stage of expansion focused on consultation with Congress. The Chief Executive Officer appeared before the House Appropriation Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies on May 1. In that hearing the CEO included testimony concerning the Corporation's compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act. In addition, on June 12, the CEO submitted testimony on GPRA and other matters to the Senate Appropriation Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies. The CEO sent a draft of the expanded plan to Congress on June 25 and requested their review and comment. The distribution included chairmen and ranking members of the Corporation's appropriation and authorizing committees.

Corporation staff met with congressional staff specifically concerning GPRA on two occasions. Corporation representatives met in April with staff from Senator Grassley's office, at their request, to discuss their expectations for the plan. The second meeting also took place at the request of congressional staff when Corporation representatives met with staff from the House of Representatives on July 28. The latter meeting resulted in two additions to the strategic plan: Part III, describing the Corporation's programs, and this appendix on how the plan was created. The final revised version of the strategic plan in draft was resubmitted to Congress on August 15.

The third and final stage of expansion was in response to: (1) a review of the strategic plan by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and (2) a letter from Representative Hoekstra, Chairman, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Education and the Workforce. The suggestions from OMB were incorporated to strengthen the plan in several areas, including the role of program evaluations in the planning process, the external factors that might affect performance, and the relationship between the strategic goals and objectives and performance goals. Representative Hoekstra's letter resulted in the addition of Goal 5's final objective and its implementation steps and other improvements in the plan. These additions strengthen the Corporation's commitment to strategic planning and results-oriented management.

## APPENDIX 2—THE RELATIONSHIP OF CORPORATION STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES TO THE FISCAL 1999 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN

The Corporation for National Service intended the goals and objectives of the *Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 1997 to 2002* to be visionary, covering the whole spectrum of community and national service. Developing the Strategic Plan was a joint endeavor involving the executive leadership of the Corporation and its Board of Directors, and was approved by the Board as a plan for the Corporation. The initial impetus for preparing a strategic plan was independent of the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). The decision to prepare a strategic plan arose from the realization that the Corporation, founded in 1993, was ending its start-up phase and entering a second phase, with an emphasis on creating a durable, unified organization sharing common goals, built on a foundation of strong management and quality service programs. Thus, the Corporation's Strategic Plan came into being to improve the management and performance of its programs.

### Fiscal 1999 Performance Plan

The fiscal 1999 Annual Performance Plan is a product created by the Corporation specifically to comply with the requirements of GPRA. As the guidance from the Office of Management and Budget requires, the Performance Plan is constructed from a program-specific perspective. While a preliminary version of the Performance Plan has been sent to OMB, the final version complete with performance goals and indicators will be presented to Congress and the public as part of the President's fiscal 1999 budget submission, early in 1998.

The Performance Plan grows out of the Strategic Plan and is based on the seven major programs within the Corporation for National Service: Learn and Service America, the three divisions of AmeriCorps (National and State, National Civilian Community Corps, and VISTA), and the three components of the National Senior Service Corps (the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program).

In preparing performance goals for each of its programs and for Corporation-wide initiatives, the Corporation used a formal set of criteria. Performance goals should:

- directly support the Corporation's five strategic goals, and wherever possible specific objectives and implementation steps contained in the Strategic Plan.
- represent an important aspect of the program.
- cover a range of possibilities for each program, from immediate outputs of Corporation effort to the long-range end outcomes found in each program's mission.
- include performance goals focused on customer satisfaction.

- be understandable to a broad audience not technically conversant in the intricacies of program operation.
- be useful to the Corporation's managers as they make decisions concerning program operation and quality improvement.
- be measurable within reasonable cost.

The Performance Plan presents annual performance goals and indicators for each of its seven major programs and for Corporation-wide initiatives. Within each program, the organizing format is based on the Strategic Plan, with each performance goal listed under the strategic goal and objective that it supports. In this way, while the Strategic Plan and the Performance Plan arose from different backgrounds, they come together to meet both the requirements of the organization and the intent of the Government Performance and Results Act. The table on the next page is presented to illustrate the intended relationship between the strategic plan and performance goals.

### **Community Impact Surveys**

In developing performance measures, the Corporation is planning to collect an important new type of data, the Community Impact Surveys. These surveys are intended to assess the impact of national service programs on the communities and organizations in which members serve in terms that are meaningful to the communities. In the process used to make these assessments, each local program will be required to nominate, at the time they apply to the Corporation or its representatives for funding, a small number of key community representatives.

These nominees will be expected to have first-hand knowledge of the quality and impact of the service work performed by members of national service programs. They should not be employees of the grantee or the local program. They could be professionals working in the same setting as national service participants. Community residents, elected officials, school administrators, and social workers might be listed. The Corporation will build a roster from the list of nominees. Annually, samples will be drawn from the roster. The selected individuals would be interviewed by phone or by mail to get their perspectives on the value and challenges of national service in their community.

**Some Proposed Performance Goals for Fiscal 1999 to Illustrate a Relationship of the Strategic Plan to the Annual Performance Plan**

***Strategic Goal 1: Service will help solve the nation's unmet education, public safety, environmental, and other human needs.***

Proposed Performance Goals for fiscal 1999:

1. Seventy percent of local service programs will be highly successful in meeting critical community needs (Source: Community Impact Surveys).
2. Senior Companions will serve 38,800 frail, home-bound, usually elderly clients (Source: Senior Corps Project Progress Report).

***Strategic Goal 2: Communities will be made stronger through service.***

Proposed Performance Goals for fiscal 1999:

1. Ninety percent of community representatives surveyed will give high ratings to the quality and impact of AmeriCorps\*NCCC projects (Source: Community Impact Surveys).
2. Twenty-five community volunteers will be recruited for each AmeriCorps\*VISTA service year achieved (Source: Annual Accomplishment Surveys).

***Strategic Goal 3: The lives of those who serve will be improved through their service experience.***

Proposed Performance Goals for fiscal 1999:

1. Students in service-learning programs will show greater improvement in academic achievement than students not in service-learning (Source: Planned Program Evaluation)
2. Twenty-five percent of former AmeriCorps\*State and National members will report that the educational trust award was a significant factor in their decision—and their ability—to go to college. (Source: Planned Program Evaluation).

***Strategic Goal 4: Service will become a common expectation and experience of Americans as an integral part of civic responsibility.***

Proposed Performance Goals for fiscal 1999:

1. By the year 2000, a majority of Americans will be engaged in service in their communities on a regular basis (Source: Independent Sector Survey on Volunteering and Charitable Giving).
2. Sixty percent of former Learn and Serve grantees will sustain their service-learning programs after the grant ends (Source: Planned Program Evaluation).

***Strategic Goal 5: The Corporation will develop and maintain sound organizational systems and effective partnerships with the wider national service network.***

Proposed Performance Goals for fiscal 1999:

1. A management information system will be complete and operational for all Corporation programs (Source: Certification by the Corporation's Chief Financial Officer).
2. A majority of survey respondents will report that the Corporation serves as a model of effective government to its partners including grantees, host organizations, service programs, sponsors, and state educational agencies (Source: Customer Satisfaction Surveys).

## APPENDIX 3—KEY FACTORS AFFECTING ACHIEVEMENT OF GENERAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

There is potentially one external factor that may affect the Corporation for National Service's ability to meet its goals and objectives as set forth in this six-year strategic plan—that is the national economy.

### **The National Economy**

All Corporation service programs are built on partnerships with other organizations at the national, state, and local levels. From the beginning, all applicants for Corporation program grants have had to provide matching funds to qualify. The amount of the required local match has increased substantially in AmeriCorps since the first year. And, as referenced in the goals and objectives section of this plan, the Corporation has set as a task for itself the overall reduction in its share of the costs in national service programs. Increasingly, the Corporation is entering into collaborative ventures where Corporation funds are a much reduced, even minor, part of the investment pool supporting service opportunities.

For example, the Corporation is leveraging thousands of new AmeriCorps members for whom it provides the Educational Trust Award for one year's service, but not the usual program grants for member support and administration. The living allowance and other major costs of these "Ed award" programs are carried by the national and local, nonprofit organizations sponsoring the members. AmeriCorps\*VISTA has a growing number of members paid for almost fully by local, state, and private sector sponsors, with the Corporation continuing to offer the education award. Both the Senior Companion Program and the Foster Grandparent Program have a substantial number of participants whose cost is also paid by local, state, and private sources. In Learn and Serve America, while its grants are crucial for stimulating the growth of new service-learning opportunities for youth, state and local school systems put up the majority of the funds needed to sustain the tens of thousand of young people who have the opportunity to combine classroom-based instruction with community-based service.

All of these funding partnerships are affected by the economy. Corporations are able to provide generous support for national service programs in part because sales and profits are high. State and local governments, including school systems, support service opportunities because they have a solid tax base and a supportive public. If, for some unforeseeable reasons, the current economic pattern of low unemployment and high corporate earnings is reversed, the Corporation's ability to leverage private sector support for national service might be reduced. Moreover, a falling or failing economy would place greater strains on how state and local governments and school systems use their resources.

Specific objectives and implementation steps in this strategic plan that might be affected

by changes in the economy include:

- expanding the AmeriCorps “education awards only program.”
- implementing the national service scholarships program with at least one locally matched \$1,000 scholarship.
- doubling the number of participants in the Senior Corps.
- broadening financial, in-kind, and human resources for national service.

Offsetting any possible decline in nonfederal support would be the growing awareness on the part of possible partners and the public that national service programs meet critical community needs and do so economically and effectively. Businesses and foundations do not support service only because they have excess capital to invest. They do so because their executives and managers have come to realize that by being partners with the Corporation in service programs together they can affect needed positive change in neighborhoods and communities, change that might not be possible without this partnership.

More and more, state and local educational authorities are accepting and adopting the service-learning concept. Although the financial resources of most school systems are stretched, school authorities are coming to know the payoff in academic achievement and personal growth—and in service to the community—that service-learning offers their students.

Thus, while a falling economy might pose challenges to the network of partnerships that the Corporation is building, the potential harm might be ameliorated by the increasing awareness on the part of the Corporation’s service partners that national service is a solid investment, in good times or bad.

## APPENDIX 4—THE ROLE OF PROGRAM EVALUATIONS IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Corporation for National Service supports a strong program evaluation effort as part of its commitment to continuous program improvement. In the first year of operation, a task force of Corporation staff and outside consultants created a strategic plan for evaluation. That plan guided the evaluation activity in the Corporation through its first three years. At the end of second year, the Corporation began drafting an comprehensive strategic plan to cover all programs. While the Corporation had initiated several national program evaluations in the first year of operation, no evaluations had been completed in time to play a major role in shaping the goals and objectives of that first plan.

Several program evaluations have been completed since. These evaluations have been available to influence the thinking of staff and Board members as they have worked to revise and expand the plan to meet the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act. In addition, the strategic plan is based, in part, on knowledge created prior to the Corporation's existence from evaluations performed by the former ACTION agency and the Commission on National and Community Service. In 1997, the Corporation established a new Department of Evaluation and Effective Practices, combining and strengthening research, evaluation, training, and technical assistance. A major goal of this new department is to see that results of planned studies reach a wider audience of stakeholders and have a greater influence on strategic planning.

The role of program evaluation as portrayed in the strategic plan is to provide information for program improvement. Program evaluation and other forms of research will increase understanding on how to support collaboration among service programs and with community organizations in general. Reviews of local programs will show how successful programs improve the lives of participants. Program evaluations will also inform decisions related to program funding, expansion, and replication. State commissions are taking on an increasingly important role in national service, and evaluation will assist in developing criteria to assess their performance. The Corporation is committed to developing customer service standards. The research to underlie those standards will be generated through evaluation.

In addition to these expected benefits of program evaluation, as the Corporation prepares its first annual performance plan, it is finding that completed program evaluations and the expertise developed by evaluation researchers are valuable in developing performance goals and indicators. Every program in the Corporation has been assisted in developing performance indicators by outside, independent researchers with data collection and measurement experience. In several instances, which the annual performance plan will note, completed program evaluations have played a major role in determining the measurable, end outcomes of service programs.

*The Schedule of Future Evaluations:* The Office of Evaluation in the Department of Evaluation and Effective Practices proposes to initiate the following research during 1998, subject to approval by the Corporation's Board of Directors.

## CORPORATION-WIDE EVALUATIONS

### **Develop Government Performance Review Act (GPRA) Data Collection and Analysis System**

*Description:* A project to design and implement data collection systems for each of the Corporation's programs in support of GPRA requirements. The effort could involve consolidation of existing data collection mechanisms, as well as development of new forms, sampling procedures, and analysis routines. Two areas of performance measurement would be involved: 1) accomplishment data; and 2) community rating of impact and quality of programs. Both data sets should be designed to meet the requirements of the Corporation's new, integrated, management information system.

*Rationale:* The plans for performance measurement under GPRA in the Corporation for National Service are likely to call for systematic collection of accomplishment data and sampling of community opinions on local program impact and quality. These requirements will demand a systematic and cost-effective approach to the annual measurement of and reporting on program performance, only portions of which now exist. Although most of the GPRA design work is currently being done by Corporation staff, developing and maintaining the required collection systems will require effort beyond the scope of in-house capacity.

*Estimated Duration:* Three years.

### **Develop a Program of Longitudinal Research on National Service Participants**

*Description:* A multi-year effort to identify the medium and long-term effects of national service on its participants. During the first year of the research, the primary tasks will be: 1) identify the stakeholders that should participate in the design and oversight of the study; 2) determine what outcomes should be used to assess the impact of service of participants; 3) determine how to operationalize those outcomes in data collection; 4) assess what existing data sources could be used as baselines for longitudinal tracking; and 5) determine what configuration of studies will create a persuasive picture of the impact of service.

*Rationale:* Because the course of longitudinal research is essentially determined at the outset, and can be changed only with a loss of data, it is essential that the early phase of a longitudinal program be developed with considerable deliberation. By determining the scope of stakeholders, cooperation and support can be ensured for both the study and its eventual results; careful decisions on the outcomes to be measured and how to measure them will ensure that the resulting data are persuasive and valid; careful assessment of extant data may allow making medium-term inferences about service participation effects much sooner than if Class 4 or 5 must be the baseline.

*Estimated Duration:* One year, followed by additional research for a to-be-determined period.



## LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA

### **Review of Current and Recent Research Literature on Service-Learning**

*Description:* This project would gather, organize, and synthesize research on service-learning conducted over the past seven to ten years, including substantive local program evaluation studies and unpublished doctoral research. A goal of the project would be to determine if new research techniques developed in the past decade, called meta-analysis, can be used to derive new insights about the outcomes of service-learning by combining the results of many existing studies. In meta-analysis, the results of independently conducted studies are combined statistically to increase the statistical power of their individual results. Such techniques are now being used successfully to draw conclusions that no single study can support.

*Rationale:* Although the volume of research on service-learning has grown dramatically in recent years, there has been little done to comprehensively synthesize this work. Learn and Serve America staff have suggested that a large-scale compilation and synthesis of this work would be of high value to the field.

*Estimated Duration:* One year.

### **A Study of the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in K-12 and Higher Education Institutions**

*Description:* This study would assess the extent to which service-learning is becoming institutionalized in academic structures where it has been implemented by individuals within the institution. Documenting the extent of institutionalization would be coupled with assessing the reasons for differences in the rate of institutional support, identifying promising practices and preconditions for the growth of institutionalization, attempting to assess the role that the Corporation is playing in the institutionalization of service-learning, and seeking information on how the Corporation can best direct its outreach activities to maximize the penetration of service-learning into academic structures.

*Rationale:* Previous evaluations concluded that the development of institutional support for service-learning lags significantly behind the growth of integrated service-learning classes sponsored by individual faculty. Clearly, the ultimate success of service-learning as an alternative pedagogy or as an instrument of school reform rests upon the extent to which it is accepted, adopted, and encouraged by the administrative structures in K-16 education. This study would be an effort to provide insight into how extensive that support is and in what ways it can best be increased.

*Estimated Duration:* One year.

## AMERICORPS

### **Assessment of the “Added Value” Provided by AmeriCorps Programs**

*Description:* A one-year study of a stratified random sample of AmeriCorps\*State and National programs to determine the extent to which the outcomes of the programs would not have occurred but for the existence of the AmeriCorps program.

*Rationale:* A variety of policy and programming issues have faced AmeriCorps since 1994, among them cost, program outcomes, program impact, and net societal benefit. On the last issue, a key variable in drawing any conclusions is the extent to which the outcomes of AmeriCorps programs would not otherwise have come about. The net societal benefit of AmeriCorps will be powerfully affected by whether AmeriCorps programs’ outcomes are uniquely attributable to AmeriCorps, or whether AmeriCorps programs’ efforts supplant existing efforts or merely hasten the completion of efforts to be addressed by existing resources. The results of such work will have both policy and programmatic value.

*Estimated Duration:* One year.

### **Comparative Study of the AmeriCorps Leaders Programs**

*Description:* A qualitative study of the structure, mission, activities, and approaches of leadership employed by the three Leaders programs.

*Rationale:* The Corporation currently has three leadership programs within AmeriCorps—AmeriCorps Leaders, AmeriCorps\*VISTA Leaders and AmeriCorps\*NCCC Leaders. The programs were developed to operate more or less independently of one another. The Board of Directors has urged the Corporation to consider consolidation of the programs, given their apparent overlap. To facilitate decisionmaking about the programs, this study would explore how the programs differ, and to what extent they serve needs that are unique to their respective program streams. It would also provide recommendations for merging the programs into a single initiative.

*Estimated Duration:* Four months.

### **Evaluation of AmeriCorps Children and Youth Tutoring Programs**

*Description:* A three-year study of tutoring programs operated by AmeriCorps\*State and National, AmeriCorps\*VISTA, and the National Civilian Community Corps programs. In Year One, a random sample of Corporation tutoring programs will be studied to independently describe their activities, compare AmeriCorps tutoring practices with tutoring techniques known to be effective, and assess evidence of impact as available from programs. In Year Two, a quasi-experimental study of a subset of the programs will provide evidence of the outcome of the tutoring on reading performance. Year Three of the study will follow students from the pro-

grams to determine the extent to which any effects found in Year Two persist.

*Rationale:* The programming emphases of the Corporation, the America Reads initiative, and the expected surge in school-focused volunteering inspired by the Summit for America's Future all intensify the need for information about the outcomes of tutoring, particularly in reading. As a recent paper from a Johns Hopkins researcher underscored, however, there is relatively little rigorous research on the outcomes and impacts of tutoring programs and only slightly more information about those practices most likely to be effective. Given its extensive portfolio of tutoring programs and its research capacity, the Corporation is in an ideal position to significantly advance the states of applied knowledge and policy information with this research.

*Estimated Duration:* Three years, with reports each year.

### **Evaluation of Education Award Only Programs**

*Description:* This research would describe the salient characteristics of the growing portfolio of Education Award Only programs, with particular attention to the differences between regular AmeriCorps programs and Education Award Only programs as regards accomplishments and impacts, member experience, member demographics, and community outcomes. The goal would be a study with both policy and programmatic value.

*Rationale:* By current projections, nearly one-third of AmeriCorps members will be in Education Award Only programs by next year. Although the intent and effort has been to have these programs be equivalent to “regular” programs using AmeriCorps members as regards member experience and program accomplishments, etc., little is known about how these new public/nonprofit partnerships will operate. Research on these programs would provide valuable information for both policy and programming.

*Estimated Duration:* One year.

### **Impact Evaluation of AmeriCorps\*VISTA**

*Description:* A multi-year study of the impact of AmeriCorps\*VISTA on service recipients, on the organizations VISTA members serve, on the members themselves, and on communities.

*Rationale:* An evaluation of the outcomes of AmeriCorps\*VISTA service has not been undertaken since the 1970s. This study would investigate the kinds of effects AmeriCorps\*VISTA has on those it serves, both institutions and individuals, using methods that will allow the Corporation to speak definitively about the difference AmeriCorps\*VISTA makes.

*Estimated Duration:* Two years with reports each year.

### **Impact Evaluation of the AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps**

*Description:* A study of the impacts of the AmeriCorps\*NCCC on its service recipients, communities, and members. Particular attention would be paid to those aspects of the AmeriCorps\*NCCC that are unique to its service delivery system, including its centralized management, relationship to the armed services, residential structure, and the outplaced service teams (spikes).

*Rationale:* AmeriCorps\*NCCC is the only program authorized under the National and Community Service Trust Act not to have participated in an impact evaluation. As a consequence of its unique structure and development, outcomes of the other programs may not be applicable to AmeriCorps\*NCCC. An impact evaluation would allow AmeriCorps\*NCCC to demonstrate the strengths of its approach and to identify areas where improvement is needed. Such a study, combined with research being conducted or planned, would allow Corporation management to begin identifying the unique strengths of the three AmeriCorps programs and thereby maximize the value of each.

*Estimated Duration:* One year.

## NATIONAL SENIOR SERVICE CORPS

### **Evaluation of the Seniors for Schools Initiative**

*Description:* An outcome evaluation of the National Senior Service Corps initiative to develop a K-3 tutoring program. The research would focus primarily on the performance outcomes for the students, using a mixture of existing data, where available, and additional measures of reading achievement. Where conditions permit, comparison groups would be used.

*Rationale:* Seniors for Schools is significant in National Senior Service Corps programming because of its explicit outcome focus. All nine project sites have outcome-based criteria for success with the students being tutored. In addition, information from this study can be added to other work proposed on tutoring to increase the understanding of tutoring programs.

*Estimated Duration:* One year.

### **Impacts in the Senior Companion Program**

*Description:* An investigation of the outcomes for the service recipients of Senior Companion services. This study will first determine current practices, outcomes likely to occur, and factors likely to affect impact. The study will then conduct a more rigorous evaluation to measure program outcomes.

*Rationale:* The last evaluation of the Senior Companion Program to focus on program impact was completed almost ten years ago and was focused on the outcomes of a demonstration program. Since that evaluation, programming has evolved, especially with the introduction of the National Senior Service Corps' "Programming for Impact" initiative. This study would build upon two earlier impact evaluations to explore and measure the outcomes for service recipients of current activities and services.

*Estimated Duration:* Two and a half years.

## APPENDIX 5—TYPES OF NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS ELIGIBLE FOR PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

original recipient of the assistance, may not exceed 75 percent of such cost.

(2) **CALCULATION.**—In providing for the remaining share of the cost of carrying out a national service program, the program—

(A) shall provide for such share through a payment in cash or in kind, fairly evaluated, including facilities, equipment, or services; and

(B) may provide for such share through State sources, local sources, or other Federal sources (other than the use of funds made available under the national service laws).

(3) **COST OF HEALTH CARE.**—In providing a payment in cash under paragraph (2)(A) as part of providing for the remaining share of the cost of carrying out a national service program, the program may count not more than 85 percent of the cost of providing a health care policy described in section 140(d)(2) toward such share.

(4) **WAIVER.**—The Corporation may waive in whole or in part the requirements of paragraph (1) with respect to a national service program in any fiscal year if the Corporation determines that such a waiver would be equitable due to a lack of available financial resources at the local level.

### SEC. 122. [42 U.S.C. 12572] TYPES OF NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS ELIGIBLE FOR PROGRAM ASSISTANCE.

(a) **ELIGIBLE NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS.**—The recipient of a grant under section 121(a) and each Federal agency receiving assistance under section 121(b) shall use the assistance, directly or through subgrants to other entities, to carry out full- or part-time national service programs, including summer programs, that address unmet human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs. Subject to subsection (b)(1), these national service programs may include the following types of national service programs:

(1) A community corps program that meets unmet human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs and promotes greater community unity through the use of organized teams of participants of varied social and economic backgrounds, skill levels, physical and developmental capabilities, ages, ethnic backgrounds, or genders.

(2) A full-time, year-round youth corps program or full-time summer youth corps program, such as a conservation corps or youth service corps (including youth corps programs under subtitle I, the Public Lands Corps established under the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993, the Urban Youth Corps established under section 106 of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, and other conservation corps or youth service corps that performs service on Federal or other public lands or on Indian lands or Hawaiian home lands), that—

(A) undertakes meaningful service projects with visible public benefits, including natural resource, urban renovation, or human services projects;

(B) includes as participants youths and young adults between the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, including out-of-school youths and other disadvantaged youths (such as youths with limited basic skills, youths in foster care who

are becoming too old for foster care, youths of limited-English proficiency, homeless youths, and youths who are individuals with disabilities) who are between those ages; and

(C) provides those participants who are youths and young adults with—

(i) crew-based, highly structured, and adult-supervised work experience, life skills, education, career guidance and counseling, employment training, and support services; and

(ii) the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their community and the United States.

(3) A program that provides specialized training to individuals in service-learning and places the individuals after such training in positions, including positions as service-learning coordinators, to facilitate service-learning in programs eligible for funding under part I of subtitle B.

(4) A service program that is targeted at specific unmet human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs and that—

(A) recruits individuals with special skills or provides specialized preservice training to enable participants to be placed individually or in teams in positions in which the participants can meet such unmet needs; and

(B) if consistent with the purposes of the program, brings participants together for additional training and other activities designed to foster civic responsibility, increase the skills of participants, and improve the quality of the service provided.

(5) An individualized placement program that includes regular group activities, such as leadership training and special service projects.

(6) A campus-based program that is designed to provide substantial service in a community during the school term and during summer or other vacation periods through the use of—

(A) students who are attending an institution of higher education, including students participating in a work-study program assisted under part C of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.);

(B) teams composed of such students; or

(C) teams composed of a combination of such students and community residents.

(7) A preprofessional training program in which students enrolled in an institution of higher education—

(A) receive training in specified fields, which may include classes containing service-learning;

(B) perform service related to such training outside the classroom during the school term and during summer or other vacation periods; and

(C) agree to provide service upon graduation to meet unmet human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs related to such training.

(8) A professional corps program that recruits and places qualified participants in positions—



(A) as teachers, nurses and other health care providers, police officers, early childhood development staff, engineers, or other professionals providing service to meet educational, human, environmental, or public safety needs in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals;

(B) that may include a salary in excess of the maximum living allowance authorized in subsection (a)(3) of section 140, as provided in subsection (c) of such section; and

(C) that are sponsored by public or private nonprofit employers who agree to pay 100 percent of the salaries and benefits (other than any national service educational award under subtitle D) of the participants.

(9) A program in which economically disadvantaged individuals who are between the ages of 16 and 24 years of age, inclusive, are provided with opportunities to perform service that, while enabling such individuals to obtain the education and employment skills necessary to achieve economic self-sufficiency, will help their communities meet—

(A) the housing needs of low-income families and the homeless; and

(B) the need for community facilities in low-income areas.

(10) A national service entrepreneur program that identifies, recruits, and trains gifted young adults of all backgrounds and assists them in designing solutions to community problems.

(11) An intergenerational program that combines students, out-of-school youths, and older adults as participants to provide needed community services, including an intergenerational component for other national service programs described in this subsection.

(12) A program that is administered by a combination of nonprofit organizations located in a low-income area, provides a broad range of services to residents of such area, is governed by a board composed in significant part of low-income individuals, and is intended to provide opportunities for individuals or teams of individuals to engage in community projects in such area that meet unaddressed community and individual needs, including projects that would—

(A) meet the needs of low-income children and youth aged 18 and younger, such as providing after-school “safe-places”, including schools, with opportunities for learning and recreation; or

(B) be directed to other important unaddressed needs in such area.

(13) A community service program designed to meet the needs of rural communities, using teams or individual placements to address the development needs of rural communities and to combat rural poverty, including health care, education, and job training.

(14) A program that seeks to eliminate hunger in communities and rural areas through service in projects—



(A) involving food banks, food pantries, and nonprofit organizations that provide food during emergencies;

(B) involving the gleaning of prepared and unprepared food that would otherwise be discarded as unusable so that the usable portion of such food may be donated to food banks, food pantries, and other nonprofit organizations;

(C) seeking to address the long-term causes of hunger through education and the delivery of appropriate services; or

(D) providing training in basic health, nutrition, and life skills necessary to alleviate hunger in communities and rural areas.

(15) Such other national service programs addressing unmet human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs as the Corporation may designate.

(b) QUALIFICATION CRITERIA TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT BY CORPORATION.—The Corporation shall establish qualification criteria for different types of national service programs for the purpose of determining whether a particular national service program should be considered to be a national service program eligible to receive assistance or approved national service positions under this subtitle.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In establishing qualification criteria under paragraph (1), the Corporation shall consult with organizations and individuals with extensive experience in developing and administering effective national service programs or regarding the delivery of human, educational, environmental, or public safety services to communities or persons.

(3) APPLICATION TO SUBGRANTS.—The qualification criteria established by the Corporation under paragraph (1) shall also be used by each recipient of assistance under section 121(a) that uses any portion of the assistance to conduct a grant program to support other national service programs.

(4) ENCOURAGEMENT OF INTERGENERATIONAL COMPONENTS OF PROGRAMS.—The Corporation shall encourage national service programs eligible to receive assistance or approved national service positions under this subtitle to establish, if consistent with the purposes of the program, an intergenerational component of the program that combines students, out-of-school youths, and older adults as participants to provide services to address unmet human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs.

(c) NATIONAL SERVICE PRIORITIES.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(A) BY CORPORATION.—In order to concentrate national efforts on meeting certain unmet human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs and to achieve the other purposes of this Act, the Corporation shall establish, and after reviewing the strategic plan approved under section 192A(g)(1), periodically alter priorities as appropriate regarding the types of national service programs to be assisted under subsection (b) or (d) of section 129 and the purposes for which such assistance may be used.

